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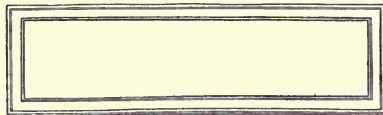
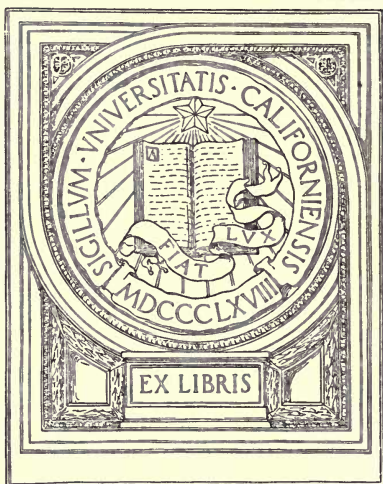
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L E T T E R

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Governor Johnstone, &c. &c.

O N

INDIAN AFFAIRS.

[By Nathaniel Brassey Halhed.]

Ne quid detrimenti Respublica caperet.

PRINTED FOR S. BLADON, IN PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

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R E T E R

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Governor Johnson & Co.

O N

INDIAN AFFAIRS.

its own Government's Report.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE
FOR THE YEAR 1870.

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LETTER

TO

GOVERNOR JOHNSTONE,

Esq. Esq.

SIR,

BY the prevalence of popular prejudice, and the contention of rival interests, by the unqualified assertions of a few designing individuals, and the defective state of general information, has the East-India Company been reduced to almost inextricable difficulties. In the hour of dismay, and in her last struggle for expiring rights, had not You voluntarily and vigorously stepped forth to her assistance, she would, ere the present moment, have

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become the servile tool of arbitrary power, or the passive victim of hungry Faction.— Alternately threatened and cajoled, fleeced and reviled, scrutinized and misunderstood, too long has she silently wept over the infringements of her privileges, the mutilation of her charters, the disturbance of her arrangements, and the disposal of her property. Every system of policy, every plan of commerce, every principle of action, by which (in conformity to frequent acts of the legislature, and under the immediate encouragement of charters from the Crown) the prosperity of our affairs in Asia has gradually augmented the trade, the power, and the resources of the Mother Country, so as to become one of the most important pledges for the stability of the empire, have been violently and repeatedly explored, to gratify a malignant, or an interested curiosity. Every record which might display the sources from whence are derived the Company's wealth and dominion, has been wantonly torn from its sacred repository, and circulated in reports and appendixes through the whole European world. By these means have her councils been distracted at home, and her designs

frustrated

frustrated abroad : The chain of mutual dependance, which bound up all her servants into one connected body, and directed the aggregate impulse of their united exertions to the one grand object of the Company's success, has been broken : Her vigilant and inveterate enemies, by thus acquiring a knowledge of her intentions, of her preparations, and of her possible resources, have been instructed to evade, to counteract, to overturn all her schemes, and to pursue their own in full security ; while her immediate agents by suggestions, by menaces, by temptations, have been seduced into a partial departure from the strait outline of their delegated functions ; have been encouraged in measures hostile to their best servants abroad, and destructive of all their own official consequence. In this perilous situation, while war preys on her extremities, and influence corrodes her vitals, languishing equally under the severity of her disorder, and the insidious prescriptions of her political empiricks, has your animated assistance exhilarated her with a new and unexpected chance for life. The task you have undertaken is not less toilsome than generous ; fresh impediments will incessantly retard your

progress—difficulty will start out of difficulty, and labour beget labour. After all, the subject is so complex, the drama is so wound up with danger and distress, that imagination itself can scarcely invent for it (within the limits of human probability) a safe and a satisfactory catastrophe to either of the parties. What *can* be done, You will do—and I doubt not, but the strength and steadiness of your efforts will as much do credit to your head, as the voluntary liberality of your interposition has already distinguished your heart. If I have taken the liberty to present you here with a few reflections, they are not such as I can for a moment suppose may conduce to your better information, but they may ultimately advance my own and that of the public; for wherever I shall have been wrong, I trust implicitly to your future orations, in the course of the ensuing debates, for correction; and I flatter myself, that upon the whole, I shall have contributed some small portion to that general mass of knowledge which must, or which ought to be collected, before the final decision of one of the most important topics that ever was agitated in the council of the nation.

To

To me the systematic regularity necessary for the well-doing of a body constituted like the East-India Company, where commerce and politicks are so intimately interwoven, seems to be as much liable to danger from too frequent instances of parliamentary interruption, as her independent rights from the encroaching patronage of the Crown. No doubt we more immediately feel an arbitrary summons, which displaces our first confidential servants, and obtrudes on us others, in whom (however worthy) we cannot at once repose that implicit confidence which long-tryed fidelity alone can justify : But to have our secrets exposed, our plans suspended, our Directors intimidated, and our arrangements thrown into confusion by reiterated formalities of legislative investigation, tends ultimately to damp the spirit of mercantile enterprise, to discompose that orderly mechanism which is the very soul of an extensive trade, and to clog all the intricate operations of credit. You, Sir, have undoubtedly traced the Company in her silent progress towards maturity, and to that splendor which rendered her an object for ministerial concupiscence. You have

have observed how an unforeseen stroke of misfortune laid her in a supplicating posture at the feet of Administration, in 1772; and I think you will agree with me that she then passed her grand climacterick, never again to recover her youthful health or vigour. To that unfortunate instant, when a temporary convention was substituted in the place of a conclusive treaty, when her embarrassed affairs were thrown on the Speaker's table as a perpetual tub for the patriotic whale, moderate and thinking men will ascribe the too evident symptoms of her probable dissolution; and why? Because Parliament has too often chosen to put itself in the place of the Company, without having the leisure necessary for an adequate attention to its affairs; because too frequent revision breaks the thread of progressive action; and because, when old systems are overturned, established regulations superseded, and new experiments obtruded upon ancient habits, reform is but another name for disorder; because an act of Parliament, empowering the Crown to grant the Company a renewal of their charter for ten years, seems a kind of national warrant for the uninterrupted exercise of all the functions,

tions, and enjoyment of all the privileges conferred by that charter for those ten years; because, in short, the very principle, that Parliament has a right at every turn of affairs to interfere in the internal managements of the East-India Company (however true and just as far as respects parliamentary omnipotence) may perhaps be deemed extremely inexpedient in its effects, and liable to be converted into a most dangerous instrument for the purposes of faction, of avarice, or of ambition. The continuation or removal of the Governor-general of Bengal is but the tool of the present hour, and of the present workmen. The mine will still be rich, when the ore now working shall be exhausted: other adventurers will presently discover a fresh vein. It is the *principle* that I wish to combat: it is not a victory in favour of this or that rival for government, that can effectually serve the Company, but a decided acknowledgement of her rights as held under Royal Charter, of her independence for a certain number of years as sanctioned and secured by act of Parliament. But as the name of Hastings has already furnished the word for attack, it must

now become also the signal for defence. If a corporate body, like the East-India Company, be liable to these incessant shocks, where is the liberty of the subject, where the faith of the Crown, where the stability of law? *The next blow may be on the Bank.*

✓ We can all recollect the wonderful revolution that took place in the Company's property, by the act of 13. Geo. III. when the qualification which should entitle a proprietor to vote, was raised from five hundred pounds to one thousand pounds stock, and when the duration of the office of Director was prolonged from one year to four. Before that memorable æra, a qualification to vote was as much my property as a freehold; and the regular change of Directors, by a system of annual rotation, was thought the palladium which would ever preserve the proprietary from a grasping aristocracy. We may perhaps, soon hear of quadrennial or perpetual *Bank Directors*—we may have a Governor of the Bank by Act of Parliament, and only removeable with the approbation of the Crown. It is vain to urge the difference of the case, with respect to the two Companies, while they both hold their existence on the
same

same tenure, a Royal Charter. The law, which discriminates not between rich and poor, is equally indifferent to all other accidents of circumstance, where the basis of the claim is one and the same. Each of these grand members of the State owes its original establishment to the voluntary combination of private merchants. The India Company's powers were as explicit as those of the Bank, and the purposes of its institution as well defined. They were to fit out ships for an Eastern commerce, and shift for themselves in an unknown world. Events gave them power and wealth, and their acquisitions are so much clear gain to the State. But now that they have raised a fortune, they must consent to have it managed by *strange* stewards. What bulwark has the Bank against similar treatment? *That* body too, has risen to a pitch of wealth and consequence unsuspected by its first contrivers: why should no patriot find it convenient to call for a revision of its statutes, an examination of its accounts, and a statement of its annual profits? No doubt he might discover, that it could well afford a salary of five or ten thousand pounds per annum to its Governor;

nor would he want a plea to propose himself, or his cousin, or his informer, to the office, and to constitute it an establishment for life. One stretch of prerogative authorizes another. If the East India Company must be fettered in the *appointment* of their Governor-General of Bengal, or of any their servants, civil or military, they cannot long expect to hold the power of *dismissal*; which if it be once wrested from them, their influence and authority in the directing, ordering, and management of their affairs, commercial as well as political, will be utterly annihilated. Yet why should Ministry content themselves with the single act of opposing the Company's wishes for the continuation of their Governor-General? It would be a curious speculation to reverse the instance, and suppose, that the Court of Proprietors having come to a peremptory resolution of recalling a Governor, Ministry had forbidden the dispatch of the necessary paragraphs——how instantaneous would be the Company's ruin on such an event, I need not attempt to delineate; and yet we are at this moment treading on the very brink of the precipice! But grant that the Crown means in future to be more retentive

tive of its interference, and shall hereafter adhere closely to the letter and spirit of that clause in the Regulating Act of Parliament, which limits its powers of prohibition *to articles immediately relating to war and peace.*—

Still, if it shall be in the habit of taking umbrage at every act of the Company, which it shall chuse to consider as refractory, or unaccommodating, and in apparent warmth of temper, determine to make all such questions the objects of parliamentary discussion, the spirit of constitutional resistance, and virtuous inflexibility, will at length be worn out in the contest, or the confusion of perpetual and harrassing references throw the Company's affairs into a state of bankruptcy.

The Court of Proprietors is the deliberative body, the parliament of the Company; the Directors are its ministry. In them is lodged the executive power, and it is necessary that they should not be too often changed, lest the course of public business be thereby impeded. The patriots of the present hour call loudly for an annual representation in Parliament, on the idea that every man of common sense is qualified to give his

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opinion

opinion without serving an apprenticeship. On the same principle the Company's affairs would not be interrupted, if each quarterly General Court produced a new set of Proprietors. But neither Parliament nor Proprietors could with safety venture to assume to themselves the management of the detail, and the functions of their Ministers and Directors. It is only in the grand outlines of conduct, in the leading features of the system, that the collective body can or ought to exert its powers of controul; but *then* its language is absolute, its commands irresistible, and obedience unconditional. "The independence of America," says the national voice, "is become a measure necessary for the salvation of this country." "We insist upon an explicit recognition of American independence," echoes the Parliament—Ministers sigh, and acquiesce; and yet we all know the sentiments of the Crown. "Mr. Hastings is the only man," say the Company, "who, in the present posture of our Asiatic affairs, is qualified to be Governor-General of Bengal." "We think it advisable to remove him," reply the Directors.

rectors. "We positively forbid you," re-join the Proprietors, *six to one*. "It is against the wish of the two Chairs," answer the Directors, "but we must submit." Here is no sophistry, no trick, no management; a plain question is agitated in a public and peaceable assembly: reason operates on their understandings, and their resolution is the result of calm conviction. "Mr. Hastings," say the Directors, "has been censured by two respectable Committees of the House of Commons. On *their* reports the House has judged him worthy of recall, and we therefore recall him." The Proprietors, in answer, urge, "That Mr. Hastings has been accused of opinions which he did not profess, and of acts which he did not command; of wars, whose commencement was equally out of his knowledge, and against his advice; of revolutions, to which he contributed nothing but personal risk and a miraculous escape; and of despotism, of disobedience, and sundry indefinite charges, whose impenetrable obscurity alone secures them from flat contradiction. If the House of Commons,

" in

“ in voting his recall*, mean to influence
 “ our councils, or dictate to our Directors,
 “ it

* It is worthy of remark, that the vote for the recall of Mr. Hastings, that loaded him with undefined charges, was never debated at the Secret Committee; a fact not generally known. It was indeed brought forward under that impression, as a kind of compromise, and may be fairly termed a parliamentary juggle. On the 14th of May last, in the Rockingham administration, when Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox were in the plenitude of power, Sir Adam Fergusson, the Lord Advocate being absent, (after a conference in the House of Commons with Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, and Gen Smith) proposed to a Committee of the whole House, that the forty-four resolutions which had been brought forward by the Secret Committee should be voted. When the House had gone through them, Sir Adam proposed another, in substance as follows; “ That it was the duty of the “ Court of Directors to remove those persons whom the “ House of Commons had censured.” Mr. Robinson, member for Canterbury, observed upon this occasion, that the House *was rather thin*, considering the importance of the resolution. It passed, however, there being at the time *twenty-eight* members in the House. This resolution, if carried into effect, would have removed every man in power in India; perhaps this might be the reason that it never was reported to the House, though a resolution of what is termed a Committee of the whole House. On the 28th of May the Lord Advocate brought forward his resolution for the recall of
 of

“ it hath exceeded its jurisdiction. We are
 “ Proprietors of the territories of Bengal,
 “ &c. for a certain number of years, under
 “ the most sacred of all compacts, the pledge
 “ of the Royal Charter, and the authority of
 “ the whole Legislature. If our Governor
 “ be criminal, he is at all times amenable to
 “ the laws of his country. If there be
 “ grievances, we who are his immediate mas-
 “ ters are the persons aggrieved: If there be
 “ wrongs, we have both the will and the
 “ means to redress them.—We have seen
 “ none.—You and your Committees have
 “ not as yet proved a tittle against him:
 “ The *onus probandi* certainly lies on the ac-
 “ cusers.—Shew why we ought to remove
 “ him, and we will do it upon evidence: In
 “ the mean time, we deem it absolutely ne-
 “ cessary for our immediate exigencies that
 “ he should continue in the Chair.”——In
 this state of the business the Crown unex-
 pectedly

of Mr. Hastings and Mr. Hornby, and it was carried,
 there being at the time *forty-two* members in the
 House. Mr. Fox spoke upon the occasion, allowed
 Mr. Hastings to possess both abilities and integrity, but
 voted for his removal, because his plan of politics had
 been disapproved of.

pectedly interferes : Parties grow warm : Ministry enter the lists against Mr. Hastings ; the Company, alarmed at the imminent danger of their most important rights, feel their very existence to depend on his support. The matter is thrown into Parliament ; a thousand discordant interests will be implicated in the struggle, and You, Sir, nobly undertake the cause of absent merit. It is not the least wonderful part of the spectacle, to observe Ministry and Opposition taking the same side of the question for Mr. Hastings's recall, on pleas totally contradictory. But though the object be different, the passion, you will say, is still the same. Ministry contend for *patronage*, the other party toil for bread : and thus it is, that the eagerness of each prevents them from taking notice of their inconsistency ; and that while both are fighting their adversary's battles in an unnatural confederacy, the very means by which they separately push the same point, precisely counteract each other's views. " The Minister intends to cast a veil over East-India delinquency," says Opposition, by way of stimulus to the attack. " *The abuses and disorders which prevail in the Bengal Government*"

ment, the various, heavy, and complicated op-
pressions which the natives suffer under them,
despotism over the subjects abroad, disobedience
to the government of this country, and a waste of
public treasure for private purposes, cry aloud for
justice on the delinquent." "Mr. Hastings,"
 adds the foaming orator, "is that delinquent.
 "I stake my character against his, and
 "pledge myself to produce evidence of
 "facts." "I renounce," replies the Mini-
 sterial Mouth-piece, "all idea of delinquency :
 "I have borne testimony to the merit and
 "the integrity of the Governor-General,
 "but I would recall him on the principle of
 "expediency : and I flatter myself that I shall
 "demonstrate this expediency to the satis-
 "faction of the House." Can those who
 hold out Mr. Hastings as a culprit, and those
 who acquit him of all suspicion of culpability,
 unite in the same vote? Will those inde-
 pendent senators, who shall remark such pal-
 pable contradictions and glaring prejudices,
 cordially join with either? Forbid it, reason
 and common sense! Forbid it, public justice and
 national honour!—The die, however, is now
 cast, and the parties have gone too far to recede :
 the different questions of expediency and of de-
 linquency

linquency must severally be brought before the House, and I hope not before empty benches* ; but who shall guess at the sentence, when we know not even the exact counts of the indictment?

It is generally conjectured that the *accusation* will consist of two members, and that an elaborate, extravagant, tragi-comic harangue will first expatiate upon "the extraordinary expulsion of a Rajah of the highest rank, &c. &c. from his dominions," and next, *on a secret article* permitted to be conditionally inserted in an intended treaty with the Rajah of Berar, of which he never received the slightest hint. On the first point it will be argued (with a proper quantity of pathetic interludes and theatrical apostrophes) that the Governor-General had no right to propose exacting a fine of fifty lacks of rupees from Rajah Cheyt Sing: that he had no right to demand a sum for contingent expenses of the war over and above his stipu-

* Twenty-eight members only were in the House when Sir Adam Fergusson's forty-fifth resolution passed, and forty-two when the vote for the recall of Mr. Hastings and Mr. Hornby was proposed and carried,

lated rent, and that he had no right on any grounds to expel him from his hereditary estate; perhaps also that he had no right to advance the rents upon his successor. In the second article will probably be urged the fatal policy of uniting the formidable powers of the Mahrattas under one active command, the danger of drawing on ourselves the vengeance of the Nizam, should we encourage Boosla to invade his dominions, and the consequences of that grand alliance of the Asiatic Princes formed under *his* auspices as a counterbalance to British influence. The above are, as far as I can judge, the *strong grounds* of the *criminatory party*. It has been remarked, Sir, upon the subject of your late admirable oration in Leadenhall-street, that Mr. Hastings's friends have selected all the strong points of argument which the subject afforded, and *made the most of them*. Now I apprehend, that You, and all those whom conviction has engaged in that gentleman's defence, would scout the observation with contempt. They have not *selected* the strong points, but the case afforded no other. They have combated sophistry by simple proofs,

and wanton falsehoods by plain matter of fact. His enemies have had all the choice of subject: they have taken up such points as, to their jaundiced eye, appeared to afford the most colour; and to say the truth, *They have made the most of them.* For they have asserted delinquency where they have yet to prove error: they undauntedly urge the same sophisticated tale after twenty refutations: and but the other day their *cloud-compelling champion* exaggerated the *visionary* objects of the Governor-General's oppression to *thirty millions*. This is *making the most* of a point, with a vengeance! And yet he had recently before his eyes his topographical friend's excellent delineation, where he might trace the progress of the Governor-General's glory to the very farthest limits of its influence, though the page ungenerously sunk his name; and where he might have learned the state of population in Bengal sufficiently to have kept himself within the bounds of oratorical probability. But to our argument.

When

When the Governor-General set out on his journey for Benares, Cheyt Sing's preparations for revolt were almost at the point of maturity; of which no evidence can be more fully illustrative, than the number of his troops, the condition of his forts, and the plenitude of his magazines, as discovered in the course of the revolution. Mr. Hastings, in the true spirit of candour, has informed the public of his intention to have assessed the Raja in a fine of forty or fifty lacks of rupees, but Cheyt Sing never gave him time to propose a syllable of such his purpose. While he meant to have lulled the Governor-General's vigilance for a few days with the submission of a well-acted repentance, the suddenness of his arrest precipitated all his schemes, and probably saved the Governor's life. Had the Raja's guilty conscience permitted him to persevere in his affected docility of conduct, had he quietly paid the fine, and suffered the unsuspecting victim to depart from Benares without alarm, there can hardly be a doubt but some of his numerous ambuscades of banditti might have massacred the Governor-General and his whole escort, before they could possibly reach Chunar.

Chunar. But the providential arrest disconcerted all Cheyt Sing's cool-blooded hypocrisy, and while it certainly anticipated the hour of rebellion *, served perhaps as an additional

* A few individuals among us make no scruple to insinuate, that Cheyt Sing had no premeditated plan of rebellion, and that his conduct was the result of instant resentment and despair on his arrest. But on those perverted minds, which a perusal of Mr. Hastings's candid narrative of the transactions at Benares, together with its appendix, shall not have awakened to the palpable impossibility, that a body of armed men, so numerous and well appointed, as that which assisted in the Raja's escape, and perpetrated the massacre of our troops, should have been instantly assembled on the spur of the occasion, without long-prepared and deep-laid design, neither argument nor proof will make any impression.

Those who can represent Cheyt Sing's rebellion as the impulse of the moment, may well deny the glaring intrigues of the two plotting Begums of Oude, and the dangerous spirit of defection, which their machinations had raised in the Vizier's dominions.

To the author of such wretched surmises, I leave it to enjoy the contemptible triumph of dissembled disbelief. I have no pleasure in pursuing phantoms; a refutation of his assertions is my present purpose, not a reformation of his understanding or principles. In addition to the connected series of deduction, by which Cheyt Sing's motives are indisputably demonstrated
from

ditional stimulus to the revolt of his deluded followers. You, Sir, have established beyond

from his actions, and to the several respectable testimonials which have already appeared to confirm each part of the charge, I shall here quote the following document, which has not yet been made public, but of which the authentic record may be perused at the India-House.

Extract of a letter from Mr. John Holland, our Resident at the Nizam's Court, to the Governor-general, and Supreme Council of Bengal, dated Hyderabad, 8th October, 1781. Entered in Bengal Consultations, 29th October, 1781.

After stating what the Nizam had said to him the preceding day, relative to the hostile disposition of the Mahrattas, which the Nizam had learned from the Mahratta Minister, Mr. Holland adds these words, "His Highness said, that the (Mahratta) Minister had informed him of *a plan of general attack* upon our possessions: one numerous army of horse had been appointed to the service of laying waste our Circars; another with Boosla and other Mahratta Chiefs, was to enter Bengal by the way of Cuttack, and a third, Scindia's, &c. was to proceed from Malva, *to support the insurrection of Cheyt Sing, and other Zemindars, to join Nujuff Cawn, and to penetrate into the heart of the Bengal Provinces.*"

Cheyt Sing was arrested the 18th of August. This letter is dated the 8th of October—an interval of only
forty-

yond the possibility of cavil, in your late forcible speech to the Court of Proprietors, that

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forty-nine days, in which it was barely possible, that the account of the arrest should travel from Benares to Hydrabad; but which utterly precludes the probability of the Nizam's having received from thence, letters of any later date, with information of those very extensive military preparations which the Raja was subsequently discovered to have secretly arranged—much less that he should have *then* have obtained accurate intelligence of those facts, which afterwards proved the existence of a very powerful disaffected party in Orde, fomented by the two ambitious Begums, to which Mr. Holland's letter most indubitably alludes.

The conversation here related, passed on the 7th of October, and was in consequence of a *previous* conference between the Nizam and the Mahratta Minister, to whom also we must allow some time for receiving and connecting his intelligence from different quarters; which will carry back the dates so far, as to leave a clear impossibility for any part of this account to have been the produce of *ex post facto* information.

But when we consider, that the Mahratta Minister's communication to the Nizam; was not of detached scraps of intelligence, derived to himself from various channels, but of a deliberate connected plan of conduct, severally agreed to by different powers, at almost the different extremities of India; and that this circumstantial account could only have come to the Minister from

his

the Governor-General, as representative of Cheyt Sing's immediate paramount, had a clear right to insist on his provisional aid for the general burthen of the war. It is a right, Sir, coeval with the existence of all Government; and as it is authorized by plain reason, and the very nature of things, so it is warranted by precedents from the Mogul history. Under the proof of this right is comprehended a full conviction of the Raja's culpability in resistance. To such culpability, and for such a culprit, what is the adequate, the convenient, and, I may add, the only constitutional mode of punishment?—A fine: and what the *ultima ratio* of feudal authority?—Dispossession. You will here naturally recollect a paragraph which I have quoted in my sixth letter, in the Morning Herald—It is as follows:

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Extract

his principles at Poona, we must of necessity allow a date of some months at least, to the Machiavelian basis of Cheyt Sing's insurrection, founded on the known disaffection of the two Begums, and on expectations of great collateral assistance, in consequence of a general compact for our extirpation.

Extract of a secret letter from the Governor-General and Council of Bengal, dated Jan. 15, 1776.

“ We thought it adviseable to fix a proper weight and standard to be invariably observed by the Raja in all money which might be coined, on pain of FORFEIT-ING the Mint, and being liable to any PENALTY the Board might *think fit* to impose, on the *first* instance of any deviation.”

Can the language of man convey in stronger terms a clear explicit assumption of all the rights and functions of Sovereign Power, or a more full specification of the mode of procedure to be applied to in cases of disobedience, *Fine* and *Dispossession*?—Rebellion, surely, is a crime of as black a dye as adulteration of coin? But revolt was not a species of guilt, which it was suspected that the Raja's known dastardly nature and avaricious habits would incline him, from any possible motives of interest or policy, to commit. Debasing of coin better suited with his genius and his pursuits. Had he thus corrupted the channels of commerce by a miserable fraud on the credulity

dulity of his people, he was to have been *fined* for the benefit of his paramount: but when the sinews of Government are shrunk by his niggard obstinacy, when his deliberate treason endangers the very existence of our Eastern dominions, he is to be protected and excused; his crime is to be palliated by the voice of patriotism at home; his punishment to be misconstrued into a flagrant act of violence. You and the public, I flatter myself, will see the matter in a very different light. Admitting that Cheyt Sing may be *morally* vindicated for seizing the opportunity of our embarrassments to throw off his yoke, Mr. Hastings is no less *morally* excusable for disappointing his design, and praise-worthy for so vigorously supporting the interests of his constituents. Cheyt Sing's expulsion from his Zemindary had no relation to his intended fine, for he never knew the intention—nor did he resist the fine, but the arrest. That arrest furnished him with an unexpected plea for his pre-determined revolt, which, it is as clear as the Sun, would have been promptly executed, had the arrest never taken place. He was infatuated—He had received bad advice—I still think him to have been led

blindfold to his own destruction. He had been taught to judge too lightly of the strength of our Government, and too favourably of his own. Independance was his object, and for that he forfeited his allegiance. But though he might have had a hoary Franklin at his elbow, he certainly had no Washington: the success which he never could hope from open hostilities, he sought by cowardly assassination. And when his attempt was defeated, when he could do no more mischief, and when the halter was already about his neck, he abjectly petitioned for the restoration of his wealth and territories in the despicable cant of slavish contrition.—The folly of his guilt can only be equalled by that of his repentance: had he been pardoned, his forgiveness would have been a pledge of impunity for the rebellion of every disaffected Zemindar in India. He was therefore expelled *of necessity*; or rather, his estates were *ipso facto* FORFEITED, from the instant that he took up arms: and it was but by an act of sovereign clemency that the sequestered Zemindary was continued in his family.

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The right of investiture having thus fully escheated to the Company, the terms by which Cheyt Sing had been bound were no longer obligatory on either party. The Zemindary is known to be fully adequate to a very large increase of rent, and the pressing exigencies of Government rendered an advance (in itself exceedingly moderate) an object of the utmost consequence. It was entirely fair and reasonable in the Governor-General to propose this addition to the revenue, and it was equally optional in the new Rajah to have refused investiture on those conditions; but as the demands of Government, even on the new lease, bear no degree of comparison to the annual sum assessed on the lands, the present Zemindar has infinite cause to be pleased with his bargain.

Mr. Hastings might with great propriety, and in strict conformity to the feudal maxims of the Mogul Government, have demanded a large sum of money from the new Rajah, as a *Nuzzer*, or fine of renewal for his lease. In proof of this, I appeal to the last page but one of Appendix, No. 14, to the sixth report of the Select Committee of last session, wherein

wherein is quoted an answer from the Roy-Royan, and Canongoes, (who are in the same place explained to be *competent judges* of the customs of the country, and of the usages of the former Government) to certain questions propounded to them in 1773, by the late President and Council of Bengal, respecting the inheritable tenure of Zemindaries. "It
 " is usual for the son of a Zemindar, after
 " his father's death, to repair to the presence,
 " and *present a Nuzzer* to the King, *that a*
 " *new Sunnud may be made out* in his name."—

A very little knowledge of Indian affairs will suffice to understand, that this *Nuzzer of renewal* is always proportionate to the supposed value of the lands, and does not, at the same time, impede the stipulation of an additional yearly rent: so that the Governor-General has here, in a very distinguished manner, exercised the *reigning* virtue, *moderation*, by obtaining an easy advance on the rent only, without proceeding to the *legal* and customary extremity of a *fine of renewal*.— On the whole a traitor has been punished as he deserved; his useless hoards have been brought into the mass of general circulation; his succession is so much clear gain to the
 new

new Rajah, and the Company's affairs are assisted in a critical moment by a fair and equitable augmentation of revenue. All parties are benefited at the expence of a villain and a murtherer. His *cause*, I trust, will now experience the fate of his person.—

The grounds on which the attack on the secret article proposed to have been inserted in a treaty with the Raja of Berar, will probably proceed, I have taken from the twenty-third resolution of the Secret Committee, read in the House of Commons, on Monday, April 15, 1782. On that question I believe *stronger* grounds of objection do not exist, or the learned mover of the resolutions would assuredly have brought them forward—these, therefore, such as they now stand, I shall beg leave with submission to canvass.—In the first place, this *secret article* of the treaty with Boosla never came to a preliminary discussion: It lies buried in the same grave with that excellent young man whose untimely death prevented the negotiation. We now talk of that article as if it had been of public notoriety, whereas it never was divulged in India; nor was it meant to be included in the treaty,

if

if Boosla could have been brought to any terms of alliance without it. Most certain it is, that the Nizam never entertained a suspicion of its existence, or traces of it would be found in his expostulatory correspondence with the two Presidencies: yet we are baited with the hazardous “ consequence of an offensive alliance with the Rajah of Berar, “ for the express purpose of recovering for “ him the conquests made by the Nizam, and “ of uniting the dangerous powers of the “ Mahratta empire under one active command.”—These are arguments *ad captandum vulgus*—the timorous forebodings of prudential politics. Mr. Hastings is a statesman on a higher scale: and his genius, like that of Augustus over Antony’s, looks down with an eye of unerring penetration on the souls of the Asiatic Princes, and anticipates the stroke that shall frustrate their designs. We may wrangle and dogmatize here on the probable bias of contingent events, and magnify the formidable result of the Nizam’s resentment, or Boosla’s ambition; but the Governor-General laughs at their pitiful manœuvres. The same hand that plays the pawn, can throw the king off the board with one slight touch of the

the finger : its importance is only among bits of wood or ivory of its own form and order. I argue, first, that the proposed treaty with the Raja of Berar was not for the *express* purpose of recovering for him what had been seized by the Nizam, but for the *express purpose* of securing to ourselves a necessary revenue and a substantial barrier on the western side of India : Secondly, that at the time of proposing *that* treaty, the Nizam's single power was of little or no weight in the political scale, and that his consequence consists in the prudence with which he has contrived to appear prepared for war, without engaging in actual hostilities. His *forte* lies in the Cabinet, and the late confederacy of the Indian Powers is his master-piece. But had Boosla and his Mahratta friends been the avowed antagonists of that league, instead of its parties, the Nizam's wisdom must have sought some fresh subterfuge for his own safety. " The " union of the Mahratta Empire under one " active command," is just as little to be dreaded. We have now for some years supported a war against all the Mahratta States but Berar on the one hand, while Hyder Ally (formidable even to the combined forces of

those very Mahrattas) has exerted all his strength against us on the other. Even should we allow Boosla to have obtained his object in consequence of our proposed treaty: suppose him to have weakened the Nizam, united the Mahrattas, and settled with us;—where should we have been more vulnerable than at present?—And who could have guaranteed to Boosla, the loyal and unshaken adherence of all the restless, ambitious, and intriguing Chiefs of the Mahratta States to his standard? The same policy which could detach Mhadajee Scindia from the combination of his countrymen, and at one effort convert him from an enemy to a most useful ally, would soon contrive the means to dissolve any other similar confederacy. But the Governor-General knew that such an union would naturally foster in itself the seeds of its own dissolution. The politics of Asia have in fact undergone an entire revolution within a few centuries. Of the four mighty Empires which once shared the whole between them, that of China alone stands undiminished. The thrones of the Tartar, the Persian, and the Mogul, are fallen, never to rise again. Their territories are subdivided, and the magic chain, which bound

bound together and rivetted their authority, is vanished into air. For myself, I attribute this phenomenon entirely to the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, and to the improvement of navigation. Whether an imperceptible change of opinions and manners may have been formed by the gradual operation of commercial intercourse, or by the influence of what other instrument this levelling system may have been promoted, I do not attempt to explain: but the *cause* strikes me with the strongest conviction, and I am more implicitly confirmed in my sentiments, when I consider the present condition of China.—Those commercial prohibitions, by which *one port only* is suffered to admit foreign vessels through the whole astonishing extent of that empire, are to me the pledges of its duration. Should it once admit ships and colonies indiscriminately,—*actum est de Republica*.—I am therefore inclined to think, that Asia will never again see another very powerful and extensive monarchy of any continuance, under a series of Asiatic Princes; and of all events, which can interest my countrymen in India, the union of all the Mahrattas seems to me the least to be apprehended. After all, we need

fear neither any single power, nor any combination of native powers in Asia; *while the sea is our own*: so long we shall predominate by land, and no longer. Naval strength is like the island of Laputa; it commands dominion by necessity of situation. While men must either march or sail to conquest, the latter will always beat; and if flying be among the arts yet discoverable by man, that nation which shall invent it, and preserve the secret, will probably, for a time, rule over the habitable globe. — Had we last year cavilled less about the interior arrangements of Indian affairs, and dispatched five ships of the line more to that quarter in proper time, we might now have assumed a tone of irresistible superiority in our negotiations with the French for a participation of Indian territories. If the Raja of Berar, by our assistance, had weakened the Nizam, we should no longer have heard of the danger of incurring *his* vengeance; and if we had been closely allied to these United Mahratta States, we had nothing to fear from *them*, till the alliance was broken. But even on that supposition, had the Mahratta powers attained to that formidable consistency,

sistency, suggested by the Penman of the Secret Committee's resolutions, the other native Princes of India, would most eagerly have embraced a combination with us, to counteract the effects of their encroachments: so that in the very effort of raising the Mah-rattas, we should have ensured to ourselves the means of security from their ingratitude. But the field of political conjecture is unlimited; its paths perplexing and uncertain.—It would be best to leave the fairy land of hypothesis to that respectable veteran, whose peculiar province it is to give the graces of manly eloquence to the apologues of infantine simplicity; who, after having ineffectually tried his versatile weapon on the first naval character the world ever saw, and on a commander, whose laurels the very blast of adversity hath not been able to blight, now wields it with two-handed impetuosity against the Chatham of the East. But *here* also, he will not find the conflict more easy, nor the victory more secure than in his former attacks. To charges of criminality, the defence will be short, clear, and satisfactory. We wait with confidence for the trial. If it be urged, that Mr. Hastings has involved
the

the Company in expensive and unnecessary wars, we appeal to the records at the India-House—to the reports and appendixes of two Committees, and on their authority refute the accusation. If it be said, that he hath lost the confidence of the country powers; we answer, “that as far as presumptive proof
 “ can be obtained, on so complicated a mat-
 “ ter, we are warranted in asserting, that
 “ many of the first Potentates of India, and
 “ in particular the Nabob Vizier of Oude,
 “ the Raja of Berar, the Nabob of the Carnatic, and the Nizam have, in many
 “ and very strong instances, manifested
 “ their perfect reliance on his integrity and
 “ honour.”—Finally, if it be suggested, that he hath forfeited the national character for moderation, we beg leave to premise upon the argument, “that moderation is
 “ no part of our *national* character in
 “ Asia;” and we will afterwards deny, that the Governor-General hath in any degree forfeited our claim to that virtue. While we were known in India but as a Company of Merchants, while we subsisted by the meer barter of commodities, and sought by assumed affability the preference of a market, it cannot be supposed that our *national*
character

character was an object of consideration. It was our *commercial character* on which we relied for success, and our behaviour was naturally suited to the subordination of our circumstances. It was Clive who gave us our first existence as a *nation* in the East, and Clive's virtues were not of the pitiful negative class. Valour and conduct formed the basis of his pile; justice and honour were the cement of the superstructure. *Then* it was that we exchanged the pliability of mercantile negotiation for the steadiness of political independence; that we acquired the character of a brave, a steady, and a generous people. If we are still to be considered as mere merchants at home, it is but just: here we possess neither kingdoms, nor revenues, nor armies: but we are not, on that account, to be deprived of our rights and privileges, warranted to us both by law and charter. If by that moderation which we are instructed to practice, it be meant that we should again reduce ourselves to our original state of traders in India, we reply, "That our *national character* among Indians will not be at all improved by a meer compromise of power among ourselves, and by substituting a
 " Governor-

“ Governor-General of Bengal on the part
 “ of the Crown, for him appointed by the
 “ Company.”—But the language of Ministry
 is, that it is *expedient* to remove the present
 Governor-General: and who shall fix that
 shifting Proteus *expediency*, to bring him to
 close examination?—It will be said, that Mr.
 Hastings’s recall will procure an immediate cessa-
 tion of hostilities in Asia.—The means however
 seem very inadequate to the end proposed.
 There are, as I think, but two methods of bring-
 ing an obstinate enemy to terms: the one is by
 victory—the other by concession. For the
 former, no man can be more amply quali-
 fied than Sir Eyre Coote: he is the idol of
 his army, the inspiring genius of the field, and
 under him a Seapoy is somewhat more
 than an Asiatic. The latter method may be
 deemed more consistent with the present *mo-*
derating principles: but its *safety* is yet very
 far from demonstration. If conquest be
 within the powers of humanity, we need not
 look farther for it than to Coote: but he
 never could have taken the field, nor would
 he have maintained his post a single day with-
 out the wonderful assistance and supplies fur-
 nished him by the Governor-General of Ben-
 gal:

gal : and it will at least be a matter of much difficulty to find a man more fertile in resources, and more gifted with the powers of civil exertion, than Mr. Hastings: A new Governor, we are told, would be more *moderate* in the articles on which he would agree to a peace. But we have not yet incontestably ascertained the *ultimatum* of Mr. Hastings's political *moderation*. His successor would probably be a stranger to the internal strength, to the relative advantages and private views of the different States of India ; in their language he must be totally deficient : and at all events, will be reduced to the necessity of acting upon the dictates of subsidiary knowledge. He will see all things through a cloud, and at second hand. The present Governor-General can hear, and speak, and judge for himself. While we condemn his want of moderation, we forget that this very conduct may be founded on the meer principles of public preservation.— It is probable enough, that he may have so accurately compared our exigencies with our means, as to have seen the absolute impossibility as well as impropriety of concession.— We have a large establishment, an increasing demand for money, and a heavy debt ; it surely would not be prudent (*even in a na-*

tional view, as long as the old adage "*salus populi suprema lex esto*," shall be sound policy) to admit of such a peace as should leave us no human chance of ever reducing our incumbrances! A peace founded on the voluntary dereliction of those express objects for which we have so long contended, would prove no less faithless than disreputable. An acknowledgment of present inferiority would but provoke future demands; and if we concede any thing now for the sake of tranquillity, the moment our enemies shall have recruited their strength, they will again commence hostilities, in hopes of farther concessions. To close the war, without settling the balance of power, would but expose the scale to the perpetual chance of new vibrations from the slightest accident: we have nearly obtained possession of the beam, and why should we wantonly reject it? The present struggles may be composed on a system that shall preserve the calm of all our Asiatic connexions for half a century, or they may be suspended by an insidious truce, which all the parties will be forward to break. I will hazard a conjecture, which I dare flatter myself, Sir, You will not wholly reject. Negotiations for a general peace in Europe have been
for

for some time on the tapis: among the various reasons imagined for their protraction, a difference with regard to the participation of territories in India is the most generally received. The French are thought to spin out the preliminaries, in hopes that some unfavourable turn of our affairs in the Carnatic may enable them to dictate more humiliating terms. Now I have not a doubt, but if our legislature, at the first opening of the present session, had suddenly recalled Mr. Hastings, and insisted on his quitting the chair on the instant arrival of his successor, that the Cabinet of Versailles would abruptly have broken off the treaty, and have trusted more to the effects of our ill-timed resolution, than to their own arms, (*an object which I think them to have still in view*) for the event of another Indian campaign. Our new Governor, Sir, were he to descend from heaven in their sight, would excite distrust in some of our allies, fear in many, and an expectation of change in all. Interest would induce some to stipulate for fresh advantages as the price of their alliance: apprehension would persuade others to stand neuter, until they should have seen the probable consequences of the new Governor's

conduct. A circumstance which thus damped the ardour of our friends, would in the same degree add vigour to the exertions of our adversaries. Chance at least would be in their favour. They have beheld but Clive and Hastings, on whose side destiny itself seemed to contend, and they know as well as ourselves that extraordinary men do not use to spring up like mushrooms. On the whole, this doctrine of *expediency*, which is now to be the engine for Mr. Hastings's removal, was the very plea for his continuation, at the last General Court of Proprietors. I appeal to the protests of the dissentient Directors, I appeal to the nervous and irresistible eloquence of the day's debate, whether any reason be so forcibly urged, or so decidedly conclusive, as that of the necessity for prolonging the authority of the present Governor-General, *on account of the very perplexed state of our affairs*. This is the argument on which he has been supported by his immediate employers, it is now the charge on which he is to be degraded. Admirable pliability of language, which (as we are told of a Hebrew word that may signify either to bless or to curse) can save at one end of the town and damn at the other! Like the ob-

literated

literated characters of some illegible inscription, that suit equally with an Otho or an old button, a Roman shield, or a rusty pot-lid!

When Mr. Hastings's recall shall have been irrevocably doomed by the whole legislative power, the business of *expediency* is still but half accomplished. The greater moiety of the task is to find another Governor-General more fit for our purpose, and to establish him in our opinions on the basis of conviction. If You be dissatisfied with the capacity of your bailiff or steward, you dismiss him, I grant, but not till you have seen another whose character you approve on a close enquiry, and whose abilities you ascertain to be such as will suit you, by the manner in which he has been used to exercise them. A Governor-General is the steward of the Company: his capacity must be suited to the nature of his office, and be broken in to its functions by experience. The bungling work made by General Clavering and his majority, the glaring absurdities obtruded on the public by Mr. F——, after six years residence in the habits of business, have given the Company a surfeit of *experimental government*;
and

“ Circuit, and the countenance given by him
 “ to very improper measures, on several
 “ occasions, relative to the letting of the
 “ districts, deserve the strongest marks of our
 “ displeasure; *but as those subjects were foreign*
 “ *to the General's military profession*, we shall
 “ not, on the present occasion, proceed fur-
 “ ther, than to express our disapprobation
 “ of his conduct.”—Another instance I find
 in Appendix, No. 3, to the first report of
 the Select Committee of last session.

Extract from General Sir Eyre Coote's
 minute, in consultation, 24th Oct. 1780.

“ As the determining upon points, relative
 “ to law proceedings, has fallen so little
 “ *within the limits of my profession*, I acknow-
 “ ledge myself *inadequate* to the forming a
 “ thorough judgment, concerning the plan
 “ proposed by the Governor-General.”—

Here then, we have one of the Company's
 Commanders in Chief acquitted of responsi-
 bility for errors of the first importance in
 revenue matters, on account of his *profession*.

Another, whose services have but this instant
 been honoured with the thanks of both
 Houses, and *who was once* (as I have heard)
a Candidate for the Government of Bengal,
 pleads *his profession* in apology for not enter-
 ing into the discussion of a legal arrangement.

Yet

Yet revenue, at least, is the first concern of the Bengal administration, and frequent occasions will arise for the exercise of a tried judgment, on questions of coinage, of commerce, of civil and political negotiation, of practical government, and of legislation. Far be it from me to suggest, and I do from my soul renounce the idea, that any one of those noble and honourable persons, whom the conjectures of the public have, at different times, named for the succession to that high office, be not amply qualified for the task. While I allow them every advantage of natural and acquired abilities, I am within the pale of respect, when I venture to hint, that experience may be wanting to the completion of their characters : nor do I think that any one of them could more effectually consult his own honour, as well as his duty to his country, than by dedicating a portion of his time, to the habits of seeing with his own eyes, and of judging upon his own knowledge, before he launches out to act upon his own bottom.

I have now, Sir, only to beg pardon for the length of this intrusion : its design, I am sure, You will not condemn. If it should

in the smallest degree serve the Company, whose interests I have most warmly at heart, and a man for whose merit I have the most profound veneration, I shall very heartily rejoice: should it by any means serve my country, even at the expence of those objects which induced me to take up the pen, I shall still have a conscious pride in my labour: should it fail in all points to be serviceable, and share the common oblivion of diurnal publications, I have yet the flattering assurance of your promised exertions in the same cause, to give new life to my expectations, and to dart a splendor where I have but raised a mist.

I have the honour to remain,

S I R,

Your most obedient servant,

DETECTOR.

4th of January, 1783.

c

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